



A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS & SECULAR MEDIA

Will the World End on May, 21, 2011? Another Harold Camping Prediction

By Albert James Dager

Advertisement

**Have You Heard
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NEWS
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I've known of this prediction for some time, but chose to ignore it considering the source. However, with the publishing of a 1/3-page ad in the December, 2010 issue of *Reader's Digest* (left), and the erection of some 72 billboards in various locations, I guess it's time to go for it.

The ad was placed by Family Radio located in Oakland, California. The brainchild of Harold Camping, an independent Bible teacher, Family Radio was established in 1958, airing its first broadcast over radio station KEAR FM in San Francisco. Over the years Family Radio has built a number of AM and FM stations throughout the United States and in a number of locations abroad.

This is not the first time Camping has predicted the end of the world. In his book, *1994?*, he posited a strong possibility that the world would end in September of 1994. He did say in his book, however, that "the possibility does exist that I could be wrong." With his new prediction he makes no claim of such a possibility. This time he is more emphatic about the date.

Camping's claim that "Holy God will bring Judgment Day on May 21, 2011" is based on his particular interpretation of the following Scriptures:

Genesis 7:4 tells of God's warning to Noah that in seven days He would cause rain to fall for forty days and forty nights to destroy all living beings on the land (those that have the breath of life in them);

Genesis 7:10-11 reveals the date when rain began to fall—the seventeenth day of the second month;

2 Peter tells us that with God one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Camping states that in 2 Peter 3:8 “Holy God reminds us that one day is as 1,000 years. Therefore, with the correct understanding that the seven days referred to in Genesis 7:4 can be understood as 7,000 years, we learn that when God told Noah there were seven days to escape worldwide destruction, He was also telling the world there would be exactly 7,000 years (one day is as 1,000 years) to escape the wrath of God that would come when He destroys the world on Judgment Day.”

Now here’s where Camping puts it all together: seven thousand years after 4990 B.C. (the alleged year of the Flood, according to his calculations) is the year 2011 A.D. (4990 + 2011 - 1 = 7,000 [One year must be subtracted in going from the Old Testament B.C. calendar date to a New Testament A.D. calendar because the calendar does not have a year zero].) Says Camping:

Thus Holy God is showing us by the words of 2 Peter 3:8 that He wants us to know that exactly 7,000 years after He destroyed the world with water in Noah’s day, He plans to destroy the entire world forever. *Because the year 2011 A.D. is exactly 7,000 years after 4990 B.C. when the flood began, the Bible has given us absolute proof that the year 2011 is the end of the world during the Day of Judgment, which will come on the last day of the Day of Judgment.*

Amazingly, May 21, 2011 is the 17th day of the 2nd month of the Biblical calendar of our day. Remember, the flood waters also began on the 17th day of the 2nd month, in the year 4990 B.C. (Emphasis in original)

Camping claims there are “additional astounding proofs that May 21, 2011 is very accurate as the time for the Day of Judgment,” but one must request that information from Family Radio.

Might Camping be right? What about the Lord’s words that no man knows the hour of the Lord’s return except the Father?

Camping believes that theological learning cannot reveal the time of the Lord’s return, but he appeals to Ecclesiastes 8:5 which states, “Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man’s heart discerneth [better translation: *will know*] both time and judgment.” (KJV - Camping’s parenthetical)

Camping further believes that about 35 years ago God began to open the true believers’ understanding of the timeline of history, and that just a few years ago God began revealing a great many truths that have been completely hidden until this time when we are so near the end of the world. His appeal is to Daniel 12:4 and 9 where God tells Daniel to hide the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Now, he believes, God has revealed to him the timeline for the end of the world.

But what if everything is still here on May 22, 2011?

Will Camping remind us that he said, “The Bible guarantees us the end of the world will *begin* May 21, 2011”?

If so, he’d have to explain what he says on his Website about the rapture occurring simultaneously with Judgment Day:

Thus far we have seen from four separate and distinct Biblical paths that the rapture must be on the last day of this earth’s existence. It must be simultaneous with the resurrection of all humanity and with judgment day.

In his book, *We Are Almost There*, Camping says the rapture will occur on May 21, 2011, and the end of the world will occur

five months later on October 20, 2011. In either case, if he’s still here on May 22 will he admit to having missed the rapture?

Elsewhere Camping equates Judgment Day with the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles:

Since the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated the harvest and related it to the end of the year, and since Christ speaks of the end of the world as a harvest time, we can see that a beautiful relationship exists between the Feast of Tabernacles and the end of the world.

It is no wonder, then, that the phrase “last day” is found in connection with the resurrection of believers, Judgment Day, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

The final day of the Feast of Tabernacles in 2011 will be October 20, the date Camping has set for Judgment Day.

So which is it? Will the rapture occur on May 21 before the actual Judgment Day, or simultaneously with Judgment Day on October 20?

Something doesn’t add up. Camping appears to have outsmarted himself with his disjointed ramblings about exactly when the rapture and the end of the world will occur. But I’m sure he will come up with a reason why we don’t understand him. And when October 21 comes, we’ll most likely hear some lame excuse about how he is really correct, but somehow we’ve missed a proper understanding of what he said.

Camping bases many of his theories on biblical mathematics, ferreting out hidden meanings according to how he understands the use of numbers in the Bible. His mathematics brought him to the conclusion that the “Church Age” ended on May 21, 1988, when, he believes, the churches stopped being a source of salvation. But then, he says, on September 7, 1994, God again poured out His Holy Spirit so that for the next 17 years a great number of people would be saved. September 7 was the first day of the seventh month, when the Jewish Jubilee was observed. Thus no one was saved between May 21, 1988 and September 7, 1994.

At the heart of Camping’s prediction lies great potential of harm to the Gospel. By saying, “the Bible guarantees the end of the world will begin May 21, 2011,” and tying that date to the rapture, he places God’s Word on the line before the entire world. When his prediction fails, the integrity of Scripture will suffer in the eyes of many.

Camping has come up with a number of bizarre conclusions based on his peculiar brand of biblical numerology. That’s not to say there is no truth in some of his teachings. Like all deceptions his brand has many truths. But those who follow him unequivocally—who place any stock in him as a sound teacher—will most likely end up in a cult-like environment, glued to their Family Radio programming and eschewing proper gathering together according to Scripture’s admonition.

The assembling of believers must have some biblical structure without falling into the institutional model and the clergy-laity format. Camping rejects any gathering as an apostate representation of the now-ended “Church Age.” So the best believers can do is gather to listen to Family Radio and get their instructions from Camping.

I shudder to think...❖